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Mr. Malanick

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The attached synopsis is being circulated to advise of the initiation of the described research project at the Center for the Study of Intelligence and to solicit any comments or suggestions from interested parties. They should be addressed to Mr. [REDACTED]

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Director, Center for the
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Project Synopsis for the Center for the Study of Intelligence

Dissent in the USSR--Can New Covert Action

Methodology Help Promote It?

The decision to undertake this study is based on the twin assumptions that the United States will continue to be faced with a Soviet Union able to array major military and political forces against it, and that US wishes to encourage changes within the USSR which will convince or oblige that country to play a more peaceful role in world affairs. The study will investigate the possibilities that the exploitation of dissent within the USSR with appropriate Covert Action methodologies might assist in building pressures for change within the Soviet Union toward more peaceful and less threatening Soviet relations with other countries. The study will look at the process of dissent, as well as its substance, in the hope of drawing ideas for effective Covert Action operations in support of the dissenters, at least insofar as that dissent is aimed at bringing about internal policy changes within the USSR.

A very substantial amount of material on dissent in the USSR has been published in recent years, based primarily on the overt protest movement in the Soviet Union and on "underground" literature, samizdat, which has reached the West. A large amount of classified source material is also available,

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principally in the form of debriefings of emigres who were formerly involved, in greater or lesser degree, in dissident activities in the USSR. Among these emigres are several who had an extremely detailed knowledge of the dissident movement. Following a study of the available overt material, classified debriefings will be examined to complete the picture as fully as possible.

One of the prime concerns, for operational purposes, is a detailed knowledge of the process of dissent: why people become dissenters; how they get drawn into "organized" dissident movements; how they exchange information; how samizdat is produced, reproduced and disseminated; how the dissenters communicate with the West; and how western ideas and publications reach the USSR. While these questions have been discussed to a limited degree in overt publications, the major source of information on this subject probably is the classified debriefing material, since these details are guarded secrets of the dissidents...for good reasons.

It is also important to understand the substance of the protests of the dissenters: the major sources of discontent; what philosophies and factions the dissenters represent and the evolution of these over the past decade or so; the degree of influence of political, economic and social ideas from the western world; and the relative importance of religious--and nationality-based dissent. The major protest themes have been examined at length in overt publications, both in popular terms

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and in detailed academic studies. Radio Liberty has made some perceptive analyses of samizdat and of interviews of many Soviets abroad conducted by RL's Audience Research Division. These should be useful source materials.

A key question is the degree to which dissent has been and is aimed at influencing the regime's policies or structure, and the degree of any significant success it has had. This involves a number of questions which may be at least partially answered in the available source material, such as: how widespread the dissent is; numbers of workers, peasants, intellectuals, scientists, Communist Party members, or other identifiable strata of Soviet society involved; the geographical distribution of dissenters; rank of those in the movement--any officials in the nation's political, economic or military power structure who may be involved; the effects thus far in altering Soviet policy; and the forms and subjects of protest that are most likely to affect the system? Over the past few years the Soviet regime has made a determined effort to suppress the dissidents, jailing some, exiling others. The study will look at the effect this has had on the dissident movements and what evidence there is of a change in regime tactics--the forms a new "thaw" or other tactics might take. The study may need to examine briefly what other studies have indicated about decision influencing factors in the contemporary USSR, especially those most closely related to popular opinion or will. What has

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successfully changed Soviet domestic and foreign policies in the recent past, especially policies which were highly unpopular?

What, then, can the West--and in particular the Agency--most effectively do to support those dissident elements in the Soviet Union which are most likely to have a significant effect on the system? The Soviet dissenters have often stated the prime importance to them of publicity in the West supporting individuals under pressure from the regime. Equally welcome has been the reproduction of samizdat in the West which is then infiltrated back into the Soviet Union or broadcast over western radios. This sort of feedback of Soviet-originated materials has been supplemented, to some degree, by western publications translated into Russian for distribution to Soviets. The relative importance of western materials in this flow will be examined. Guidelines can be developed for the selection of material to be published and distributed. The role that Soviet emigres can play will be examined. They represent a massive wealth of knowledge and talent, much of which is untapped. When traveling in the West, Soviets are often eager to obtain and read literature banned in the Soviet Union and we have been fairly effective in fulfilling their desires in this respect. The study will examine how these often brief contacts can be expanded into real dialogues whereby more can be imported than the contents of a book or two.

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The substance of the dissident movements in the USSR is not unrelated to the question of recruiting Soviets for intelligence purposes, and this study hopefully will provide a useful addition to the reference literature for such activities.

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